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Statement submitted by International Council of AIDS Service Organizations, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.

16-08475 (E) 270516

Please recycle

Statement

The diversity of today's HIV epidemic demands a variety of rights-based and gender-transformative responses. However, while this has long been part of the HIV lexicon, many countries and communities have not yet fully acknowledged or adopted such rights-based and gender-transformative laws, strategies, policies and programs.

Comprehensive approaches to HIV are not new, but the global community, national governments, international organizations and donors have not yet put them at the center of HIV and health responses. Most notably, human rights, gender equality, treatment for all, combination prevention and increased financing must anchor HIV responses. Not all countries, communities or groups experience the epidemic equally. In some countries, HIV is "urbanized" and heavily concentrated within cities, and further concentrated among particular groups, such as men who have sex with men, sex workers, people who use drugs, people in prison, young women and girls, and transgender people. In other places, the HIV rate is growing among groups living in areas with little access to health, social and legal services, as well as among groups on the move, particularly relevant in light of the current massive humanitarian emergencies (refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced people). In yet other contexts, HIV-TB co-infection is a growing cause of illness and death.

Following the evidence, each country must localize and tailor its HIV response. This means they must address structural and political determinants of HIV and health inequity. Among these determinants are punitive laws and policies that criminalize people living with HIV, gay men and other men who have sex with men, sex workers, transgender people, people who use drugs, and women and girls. Also vulnerable are migrants, people in prison, people with disabilities and indigenous peoples. Governments should have policies in place to redress discrimination based on race, ethnicity, tribe, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, and age. For countries where HIV is on the rise, such attention is urgent. The risk of inaction is great: more failed policies, inadequate programmes, downward pressure on national economies and lost resources — and most importantly of all, lost lives.

Slogans and simple answers will not end the AIDS epidemic. Efficiencies in health service delivery will not get us there alone. Political leaders at the community, national, regional and global levels must recommit to take real steps to end AIDS. This means using a human rights approach to:

a. Address punitive policies and practices that prevent people vulnerable to, at risk of and living with HIV from receiving the health, legal and social services they need;

b. Eliminate laws that criminalize HIV transmission, exposure and non-disclosure, homosexuality, gender non-conformity, sex work, and drug use; and

c. Challenge trade and aid policies that hamper HIV commodity production, purchasing and distribution systems.

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Statement submitted by International Ecological Safety Cooperative Organization, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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16-08476 (E) 270516

Please recycle

Statement

Youth Empowerment: An Important Task towards Sustainable Development

Review

The United Nations Youth Empowerment and Urban Ecological Safety Action Plan was jointly initiated by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the International Ecological Safety Collaborative Organization (IESCO) at the 25th session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat. The plan aims at guiding every country to release an Urban Youth Survey Report; carrying out training on ecological skills and technical training for youth; conducting an Urban Ecological Safety Index Ranking within the framework of UN-Habitat; and setting up "UN-Habitat Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Awards".

Concept

UN-Habitat Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Awards aim to inspire youth leaders to start up business by adopting innovative technology so as to play an unique role in solving social and environmental problems. By attracting, supporting and inspiring young innovators and entrepreneurs, the awards will further encourage the programs that can create great social, economic and environmental benefits and make them the catalyst to sustainable development; and inspire people to contribute to youth employment, the formulation of poverty alleviation plans, guarantee of ecological safety and sustainable development in the future.

Action

The "Mass Innovation and Entrepreneurship" Strategy outlined by the government of the People's Republic of China provides a sound environment for youth innovation and entrepreneurship, which is highly valued by governments of all countries. China will provide policy support in land, capital and industrial development. The Ecological Civilization Committee of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, UN-Habitat and IESCO initiated the United Nations Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Industrial Park under the framework of the United Nations Youth Empowerment and Urban Ecological Safety Action Plan, which includes:

1. Building open, convenient and low-cost infrastructure facilities for youth innovation and entrepreneurship;

2. Lowering the threshold for youth innovation and entrepreneurship and encouraging scientific and technical personnel and youth to start-up businesses in the Park;

3. Supporting public service in the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Industrial Park;

4. Providing financial support for the development of the Industrial Park;

5. Improving the investment and financing mechanisms;

6. Carrying out imaginative activities of innovation and entrepreneurship;

7. Creating a multicultural atmosphere for youth innovation and entrepreneurship; and

8. Establishing a global database and network platform for youth innovation and entrepreneurship.

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Statement submitted by International Federation for Family Development, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Please recycle

Statement

After 193 world leaders adopted the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations Development Programme will support governments around the world in tackling the 17 new Sustainable Development Goals. The Goals aim to end poverty, hunger and inequality, take action on climate change and the environment, improve access to health and education, build strong institutions and partnerships, and more.

Over many decades, the United Nations has proven to be the main empowering institution to protect human rights, improve the role of the world's women and nurture the next generation through the work on youth. Within the Goals, a family approach is a step forward to the long-standing efforts of the United Nations intended to remove all barriers and ensure the active participation of families in society, especially with regard to decisions on investments in health, housing and education.

As it has been stated in different documents, families have a crucial role in social development. They bear the primary responsibility for the education and socialization of children as well as instilling values of citizenship and belonging in the society. Families provide material and non-material care and support to members, from children to older persons and those suffering from illness, sheltering them from hardship to the maximum possible extent. The very achievement of development goals depends on how well families are empowered to contribute to the achievement of those goals. Thus, policies focusing on improving the well-being of families are certain to benefit development. Henceforward, to most effectively reach the Goals and ensure that no one is left behind, we are arguing that we will have to do a better job in leaving no family behind.

Our Federation has been working persistently in this family approach and has recently organized its 19th International Family Congress in Mexico City in October 2015. The Congress hosted 1,836 delegates from 43 countries. In the final Declaration, the delegates emphasized that families have a crucial role in social development and confirmed their commitment to helping families worldwide and to contributing to universal peace and respect for human rights through Family Enrichment Courses and other programmes.

The Declaration was presented in February 2016 at the 54th session of the Commission for Social Development and fully explained in a side-event themed "Leaving no family behind" at United Nations Headquarters. Delegates to the Congress welcomed the recognition within the new Goals, specifically 1 to 5, and that the very design, development, implementation and monitoring of family-oriented policies and programmes are essential for the success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Various recommendations included in the Declaration help to achieve Goals 1 and 2, when considering the family as a unit in which the well-being of their individual members is promoted, while a breakdown can be both a root cause and an effect of poverty. A range of family-oriented policies play a vital role in tackling the intergenerational transmission of poverty, which also includes children's health, development in nutrition and families' financial resources and behaviours.

A family approach also helps to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being at all ages (Goal 3) when the family facilitates intergenerational solidarity. Therefore, appropriate policies and programmes should be focussed on promoting equitable access to resources that strengthen family ties, such as family enrichment courses, positive parenting classes or mentoring programmes; to encouraging volunteering of older persons in schools, community service for high-school students, and young people helping older persons with their daily activities.

The SDGs also reinforce the family approach by mentioning cohesive families. Cohesive families are said to provide a nurturing environment to children and youth, for the full realization of their rights and capabilities. They also are a meeting point for generations offering inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels for all people, irrespective of sex, age, race, ethnicity, and including persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, especially those in vulnerable situations.

Furthermore, addressing cohesive families promotes gender equality and empowerment of women by recognizing the value of unpaid care, domestic work and the economic dimension of their activity (Goal 5). It is in such an environment where girls and boys are treated equally and parents share care and household responsibilities. Policymakers may find in cohesive families a potential way to contribute to the achievement of several sustainable development goals and targets.

All the efforts made to protect human rights for women and young people could be enriched by adding the family as a political priority. A family approach would represent a logical step forward to ensure that no one is left behind, especially women and young people who are naturally part of the family and proven to be the most vulnerable. This family empowerment would promote policies at the national, regional and international levels by removing social, political, legal and economic barriers to their active participation in society. Such a step forward would enable families to assert greater control over their resources and life choices and by providing instruments to recognize the time, effort and money that committed families invest in their children.

Since policymakers may encounter difficulty valuing families and people, our Federation is promoting the project, Making Families a Cornerstone in Policymaking: A Global Guide for Policymakers on Family Impact. In this project the family impact lens pays attention to relationships between people and the fact that family policies are most effective when targeting the family unit and its dynamic as a whole, rather than focusing on the needs of individual family members, as a recent Report of the United Nations Secretary General said. Yet, this conceptual distinction is often overlooked in policy discourse and decision-making. Policies too often ignore the family unit and continue to target individuals.

The value of elevating families in policymaking is supported by a solid body of research evidence that endorses families as a fundamental component of a strong and vital society. Families are a cornerstone for generating the productive workers that a sound economy demands and for rearing the caring, committed citizens that a strong society requires. For example, researchers have documented the valuable contribution families make in promoting their members' academic success, economic productivity, emotional well-being, and social competence among other outcomes of interest. In addition, professionals who educate, administer, or deliver services to families espouse the desirability and viability of family-focused approaches for more effectively and efficiently achieving program goals.

Furthermore, dialogue and partnerships between social policy makers and relevant stakeholders, including families, family associations, the business sector, trade unions and employers should be enhanced to develop and improve family-friendly policies and practices in the workplace. This should include both housework and care, because, in reality, both are a form of care, housework having important implications for the well-being of all members of the family.

How can this be achieved? A proposal includes three very clear recommendations: policies to promote education about freedom and rights; information and advice regarding responsibility and duties; and legislation on both these areas. Sound family policies must be based on adequate research and analysis. Family policy monitoring and evaluation is also indispensable to advance policy development; continue policies that work and discontinue those that have proven ineffective. Support data collection and research on family issues and the impact of public policy on families and invest in family-oriented policies and programme design, implementation and evaluation.

According to the recent resolutions of the Commission for Social Development and the Commission for Population and Development, an evidence-based approach is definitive to policy development, monitoring, review and follow-up. There never will be a family perspective without measurement tools. That is why we promote the definition of evidence-based quantification of family impact according to Global Well-Being Indicators. The scope should be both narrow and broad with a Telescopic focus on families, and a Kaleidoscopic examination of both family policies intentionally designed to improve family functions and prevent dysfunctions; and any policy that inadvertently influences family functioning and decision-making. In a few words, we are promoting the concept that families are what to think about and that the family impact lens is how to think in a more holistic way that recognizes the importance of commitment to others, which is first learned and practiced in families.

Evidence-based Global Family Well-Being indicators are projected to be an outcome of a research-based method that critically examines the past, present, or probable future effects of a policy on family relationships, family stability, family members' ability to carry out their responsibilities, and so forth. Analysis of family impact can help policymakers to better grasp how strong families support societies and how societies can support strong families. The goal is to turn family rhetoric into reality. To use the family impact lens to shift the current rhetoric from merely appreciating families in the abstract to substantively viewing families in more pragmatic, accurate, and effective ways.

Our initial thinking is outlined below on how we plan to encourage the world's decision makers to view policies through family-coloured glasses. That is, developing policies that create the conditions for families to thrive and that consider any policy for its impact on families:

1. Develop culturally appropriate principles and indicators that will serve as the core for a family impact checklist that builds on the knowledge and experience of family experts from around the world; we will begin with (but not be limited to) principles such as family responsibility, family stability, family relationships, family diversity, and family engagement.

2. Our work will target family policies designed to promote the best interests of families. Also, we will focus on other policies that may not specifically address family interests, yet may have inadvertent consequences for them. For example, we will conduct family impact analysis on three or four 2015 sustainable development goals. We will strive to incorporate these findings into United Nation's capacity building efforts and communicate these findings to the policymakers who are developing implementation plans.

3. Pilot test different methods for bringing the family impact lens to policy and practice with our partners in academia and civil society in different countries around the world in those jurisdictions where family policies are made; because policymakers typically seek out information in the context of trusted relationships, pilot tests will focus on jurisdictions where our partners have established trusting relationships with policymakers.

4. Produce brief, accessible publications targeted to the issues and decisions policymakers face in their jobs such as why family impact is important, how policymakers can examine family impacts of policy decisions, in what ways the family impact lens has benefited policy decisions around the world, and so forth.

5. Develop a toolkit that can be used as a prototype to encourage more widespread adoption of the family impact framework and methods.

6. Evaluate whether our efforts are reaching our goals of encouraging policymakers to view issues through the lens of family impact, incorporate family considerations into their jobs, and take steps to build better public policies for families.

7. Plan for dissemination through the development of resources, both written and video that capture how much can be accomplished and what can be learned in the pilot tests and evaluations.

8. Build on what is learned to vision what strategies and leadership are needed to promote widespread global adoption of the family impact framework.

If we really want to leave no family behind, we need to define the right well-being indicators needed to assess the impact of implementing a family perspective. From a Universal Human Rights perspective, it is also necessary that these indicators should be globally pertinent in the definition, but locally appropriate in the application.

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Statement submitted by International Federation of University Women, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.

16-08478 (E) 270516

Please recycle

Statement

Implementing the post-2015 development agenda on quality education for girls and women

The issue

Graduate Women International notes it is a matter for concern that global gender disparities still exist and disrupt the education continuum; in pre-primary education 70 percent of countries have achieved gender parity, compared to around 66 percent in primary, 50 percent in lower secondary, 29 percent in upper secondary and only 4 percent in tertiary. Graduate Women International reaffirms that the realisation of the right to quality education at all levels contributes to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Women earn only 60-75 percent of men's salaries; lack of access to education is a contributory factor to this disparity. For demographic dividends and sustainable development, investment in educating, employing and empowering women is essential to facilitate their full participation and integration in the formal economy.

The cause

Barriers to girls and women accessing and completing education exist at many levels. Merely ensuring access to education is not enough; unsafe school environments and biases in teacher behaviour and training, teaching and learning processes, and curricula and textbooks often lead to lower completion and achievement rates for girls. Social norms and cultural practices such as child marriage, domestic responsibilities and financial prioritisation of boy's education contribute further to lack of opportunity for girls and women in education. Existing data does not provide sufficient information about the situation of women and girls throughout their lives, which contributes to a lack of understanding on the best way to tackle barriers to girls and women's education and access to employment.

Graduate Women International Position and Recommendations

As the realisation of the right to education contributes to the empowerment of women and girls, Graduate Women International calls for the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into education and training programmes at all levels and all spheres, including science and technology. Gender-sensitive curricula and pedagogies need to be developed and implemented, including the gender sensitisation of all educators and by training and hiring qualified women teachers. Building safe and inclusive learning environments for girls and young women, and ending violence against girls and women, need to be priorities. Eradication of female illiteracy and support of school-to-work transition through skills development programmes to enable girls' and women's active participation in economic, social and cultural development should be initiated. Specific areas of gender disparity need to be addressed by awareness-building initiatives and by involving boys and men in discussions about disempowering cultural and societal practices.

As identified by the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda, financing to institutionalise data collection, analysis and review on key gender equality indicators in education would mobilise necessary support and partnerships for the implementation of the post 2015 agenda, enhance cooperation across ministries and institutions and help identify areas where support is needed.

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Statement submitted by International Food and Beverage Alliance, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

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Please recycle

Statement

The International Food and Beverage Alliance thanks the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for the opportunity to provide a written statement for the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2016.

International Food and Beverage Alliance is a group of eleven global food and non-alcoholic beverage companies who share a common goal of helping people around the world achieve balanced diets and healthy, active lifestyles.

We are committed to ensuring our businesses create and preserve the long-term sustainability and health of the environment and the communities we serve.

In 2008, our CEOs came together and adopted a set of public commitments in support of the implementation of the 2004 World Health Organization (WHO) Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. We committed to reformulate products to reduce fat, sugar and salt and innovate to create products that help people eat healthy, balanced diets. We committed to provide clear, fact-based nutrition information and make labels easier to understand. We adopted responsible marketing practices, restricting the marketing of foods high in fat, sugar and salt to children and committed to promote healthier lifestyles in communities around the world and in our workplaces.

International Food and Beverage Alliance members are contributing to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition and promoting good health and well-being.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for worldwide, joint action by governments, civil society and business to promote sustainable global development over the next 15 years and is predicated on the fundamental principle of collaboration.

We are pleased that SDG 17 — "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development" — recognizes the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships for mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to support the achievement of the SDGs.

Our members have a long and successful history of supporting public health initiatives in partnership with governments and civil society. Our experience has shown that collaborative actions represent one of the most cost-effective ways to address public health challenges. Today, public-private partnerships represent a permanent place in the global public health landscape.

The effectiveness of multi-stakeholder partnerships in delivering the SDGs will depend on the willingness of the public sector, private sector and civil society to work together.

Unlike the Millennium Development Goals which were designed by governments, the private sector, including International Food and Beverage Alliance members, were engaged in helping shape the SDGs.

We are hopeful that the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs taking place at the High Level Political Forum in July will foster an enabling environment for the development of a practical partnership model so that the successful collaboration achieved among governments, the private sector and civil society in designing the SDGs will continue as stakeholders move towards designing an effective implementation plan.